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Alaska Urged to Try New Types of Schools

By IAN MADER
Associated Press Writer

ANCHORAGE (AP) — Alaskans outside the education establishment should tap their pioneering spirit to found new and better types of schools, the U.S. Secretary of Education said Monday at an Alaska education summit.

"Why shouldn't a museum start a school? Why shouldn't a shopping center start a school?" said Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander.

"The schools you need in Alaska — by the time your fifth graders become seniors — will be so difficult to recognize as they (the students) are."

Alexander spoke before an audience of close to 500 educators, community leaders and members of the public invited to the Egan Center in Anchorage to testify on a list of 49 proposals to reform schools in Alaska.

The proposals mirror the national effort, America 2000, to do such things as increase high school graduation rates, set uniform achievement levels, attain international superiority in math and science, and remove drugs and violence from school grounds.

The secretary said the role of the federal government is mostly to set goals, and that states must do most of the work on their own to meet them.

The Alaska 2000 proposals include a state income tax for education, a voucher system whereby parents would choose the school where their children would be sent, and additional training requirements for teachers.

The proposals have drawn fire from the state's largest teachers unions.

State officials at the summit stressed that the proposals have been shaped by the public.

They came from brainstorming sessions in January among 120 Alaska business leaders, Native leaders, legislators, members of the public, teachers and administrators, said Alaska Commissioner of Education Jerry Covey.

The state board of education planned to collect public testimony Monday and today and use it to amend the proposals before sending them to Gov. Walter J. Hickel, who will introduce some of them to the legislature next year.

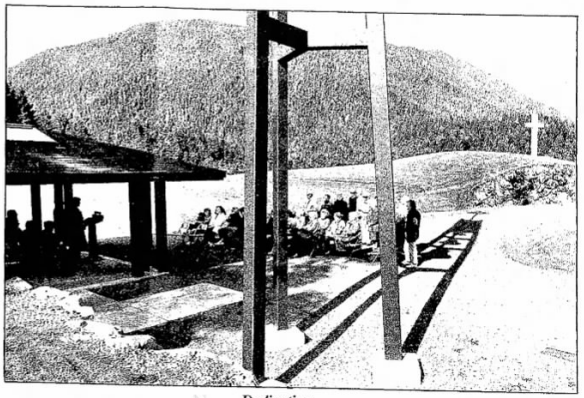
"Some proposals will be implemented as soon as next school year," said Covey.

The secretary praised the plan to allow "charter" schools.

It would allow groups such as parents, businesses and museums to arrange contracts with teachers and school boards to create new schools that would use public funds.

"Charter schools — it would be perfect for a pioneer state like Alaska," Alexander said.

Continued on Page 8



Dedication

A carillon casts its shadow alongside a crowd gathered at the city cemetery Sunday afternoon for the 10th anniversary and dedication ceremony of the cemetery. Lois Rhodes, president of the Sitka Cemetery Association, stands at the podium paying tribute to Hixie Sande Arnoldt — standing beside her — for her donation of the carillon. The cemetery shelter also was dedicated. During the ceremony, Cecil McClain, past SCA president, gave a history of the cemetery; SCA Vice President Roger Hannes spoke of future direction; Sitka Pulp Corp. Administration and Personnel Manager Don Best spoke during the shelter dedication; Father John David of St. Peter's Episcopal Church gave the invocation; and Father Jerry Frister of St. Gregory's Catholic Church gave the benediction. (Sentinel photo by James Poulson)

Changes Expected in Exxon Oil Spill Panel

ANCHORAGE (AP) — Regardless of who's living in the White House come January, there will likely be new people holding the federal seats on a panel deciding how to spend millions in Exxon Valdez settlement money.

The expected changes could have far-reaching implications, especially for the possible purchase of habitat deemed damaged by the 1989 spill in Prince William Sound.

If Gov. Bill Clinton, the Democrats' presidential nominee, wins on Nov. 3, sources both in and out of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council expect two of the three federal representatives to be replaced with people more inclined to approve purchases of oil-damaged habitat.

To that end, national leaders of the Sierra Club and the Wilderness Alliance met about two weeks ago with members of Clinton's transition team to discuss new administration appointments, including to the Trustee Council.

"There have been discussions on a whole array of transition-type appointments," said Mike Matz, national director of the Sierra Club's public lands program. "But there is no commitment."

Many said environmentalists told Clinton's staff how they think the settlement money, to be paid over 10 years by Exxon, should be spent and that habitat acquisition is "right at the top of the list."

"They are considered more amenable to that than the present folks" in the Bush administration, Matz said. "We definitely would like to see a change in approach."

Likely to leave the council in a Clinton administration are Michael A. Barton, the U.S. Forest Service chief in Alaska, and Curtis V. McVee, special assistant to Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan Jr., said L.J. Evans, spokeswoman for the trustee council.

McVee is likely to be gone even if Bush is re-elected since Lujan is widely expected to be left out of a second-term Bush cabinet. The third federal member of the six-member state-federal panel, Steven Pennoyer, who heads the Alaska region of the National Marine Fisheries Service, is expected to remain.

Evans said the "pacing" of the council's work could change with new members while "the basis of what's going on here" would not be affected.

The council, created by the Oct. 9,

Continued on Page 8

Murderer in Craig Case Still at Large

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) — Ten years ago this month, the fishing boat Investor quietly drifted out of harbor in the Southeast Alaska village of Craig with at least nine people on board.

Eight of them were dead — six adults and two children.

The Investor later was set afire, and most of the evidence of the slayings went up in smoke. To this day, the person — or persons — responsible for one of the worst mass slayings in Alaska remain at large.

Fisherman John Kenneth Peel of Bellingham, Wash., was tried twice on murder charges in the case. The first jury deadlocked; the second acquitted him.

In the four years since, Peel has returned to his home state and started a new life. Two years ago he filed a lawsuit demanding $177 million from the state and a new investigation to find the killer and clear his name.

Prosecutor Mary Anne Henry says she still checks out tips about the case. But so far nothing has convinced her that someone other than Peel committed the grisly crime.

The case against Peel was entirely circumstantial. For jurors, there were just too many holes in the state's case, too much room for reasonable doubt to seep in.

State Superior Court Judge Thomas Schultz, who presided over Peel's first trial in Ketchikan, told the Juneau Empire recently that the state had a decent case against Peel. But he would not have voted for conviction.

"While there was some evidence indicating that he did it, I think there were some doubts based on reasonable common sense," Schulz said. "It would have been hard to convict."

In some ways, it might have been the perfect crime.

The skipper of the 58-foot Investor was Mark Coulthurst, 28. He and his wife, Irene, made the fishing business a family affair. They fished on the boat with their two children, Kimberly, 3, and Johnny, 4. Mrs. Coulthurst, also 28, was expecting their third child.

It was their first season aboard the Investor.

The Investor also was the summer home of four 19-year-old crewmen: Dean Moon and Jerome Keown, both of Blaine, Wash.; Michael Stewart of Bellingham and Christopher Heyman of California.

Sept. 5, 1982, started out as just another day between fishing openings near the end of the commercial salmon season. After dinner and a celebration of Coulthurst's birthday, the family returned to the Investor.

No one living, except the killer or killers, is sure what happened that night. At some point, shots were fired on the Investor and the family and crew were killed.

Those on nearby boats heard what they thought might have been shots and screams. One looked out and saw a man standing on the dock, looking back at the Investor with what was likely a rifle in his hand. But nobody looked any further.

The next morning, while most people at the harbor were still asleep, the Investor was strafed from a neighboring boat and quietly drifted away.

Some time later, its engines were started and it was piloted to Ben's

Continued on Page 8

DEC Honors Two Sitka Employees

By Sentinel Staff

Sitka's Water Foreman Pat Welsh and Water Operator Leo Evans shared this year's Department of Environmental Conservation Large System Operator of the Year Award for their efforts in ensuring safe drinking water for Sitka and helping Sitka avoid millions of dollars in water filtration costs due to new federal rules.

DEC Deputy Commissioner Mead Treadwell presented Welsh and Evans with plaques at a banquet last week during the Alaska Water Management — Southeast Section conference held in Sitka.

Welsh is responsible for operation and maintenance of Sitka's water system, and Water and Wastewater Superintendent Mark Buggins. He has been a city employee since 1967 and has been responsible for water operations for 22 years.

Evans, a city employee since 1985, has been responsible for drinking water treatment for the last 18 months.

Buggins said Sitka is one of only three Alaskan communities granted exemptions from the Environmental Protection Agency's Surface Water Treatment Rule, because of the purity of Sitka's Blue Lake water source and a program put in place to protect it from contamination.

Without the exemption, Sitka would have had to spend $6 million to $10 million to build a filter plant and $300,000 per year to operate it.

WELL DONE — Department of Environmental Conservation Deputy Director Mead Treadwell, left, congratulates Sitka Water Foreman Pat Welsh on his award, as Florence Welsh looks on. (Sentinel photo by James Poulson)

Alaska Airlines to Close 2 Reservation Centers

SEATTLE (AP) — In another cost-cutting measure, Alaska Airlines said Monday it will close its telephone reservation centers in Anchorage and Juneau this fall.

The Anchorage operation, which employs 36 full-time and 23 part-time workers, will close Nov. 14, while the Juneau center, with 12 full-time and six part-time employees, will close Oct. 30.

The Seattle-based airline said in a statement that it would save about $500,000 a year by moving the operations to its larger reservation centers in Seattle and Tempe, Ariz.

Employees in Anchorage and Juneau will be able to transfer to those centers, though company spokesman Lou Cancelmi said there weren't enough openings for everyone.

"There will be a net increase in jobs in Seattle and Tempe, but I have no idea now how much of an increase," he said.

"But from a practical standpoint, agents in Anchorage and Juneau are more experienced and would have significant seniority over many of those in Seattle or Tempe," he said. "They would have bumping privileges, and could take jobs there."

Those not wanting to move or with lesser seniority would be eligible for two to nine weeks of severance pay, the airline said.

"This is disappointing because these two centers have been a fixture at Alaska Airlines for years, and their closure, in all likelihood, means that some of our employees will leave the airline," said Pat Glenn, executive vice president and chief operating officer.

Glenn said the airline was taking the action to "cope with the pressures of an anemic economy and persistent, destructive fare wars."

Alaska Air has been in tough financial straits largely as a result of a prolonged fare war with Anchorage-based MarkAir Inc., losing $33.5 million in the first six months of this year.

Earlier this year MarkAir, which used to have cooperative ticketing and frequent-flyer agreement with its rival, muscled in on the southeast Alaska and Seattle markets long dominated by Alaska Air.

MarkAir has taken even bigger lumps in the fare war, being forced to file for bankruptcy protection in June and to announced plans to lay off about 250 workers. The carrier still flies to Seattle, but gave up on Southeast in May.

In recent months, Alaska has canceled plans for a $20 million to $75 million maintenance complex in the Lower 48, ended service between California and Toronto, reduced its flight schedule for the fall season and furloughed about 650 employees.

Cancelmi said the savings from closing the reservations offices were significant.

"Half a million dollars is a lot of money," he said. "We're taking a number of steps to lower our costs and looking at others as we go through this process. Nothing is sacred.

"We're in the worst environment this airline has seen in 20 years — this year will be the first loss for the year after 19 straight years of profit," he said. "A half-million in savings is not something we can turn our back on."

Two 'Love Boats' to Leave Alaska's Inside Passage

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) — Two princesses will end their 20-year reign over Inside Passage waters this week.

The 353-foot, 610-passenger cruise ship Island Princess, once featured in the 1970s television series "Love Boat," will make its final Juneau stop on Saturday.

Its twin, the Pacific Princess, made its final call here last week.

The ships are leaving Alaska waters to be refitted, at a cost of $20 million each, for work on the European circuit, Princess Tours spokeswoman Delaine Follows said.

They will be replaced by two larger ships, the Crown Princess and the Regal Princess. The twin ships are 811 feet long and carry up to 1,590 passengers each, Follows said Monday.

Princess Tours is increasing its Southeast Alaska capacity for 1993 by 36 percent, she said in a telephone interview from the company's Seattle headquarters.

The company will run six ships through the region next summer, the same number as this year, Follows said. The capacity increase comes with the larger size of the ships, she said.

Princess Tours and its sister company, Los Angeles-based Princess Cruises, are owned by Peninsular and Oriental, based in London.

The Pacific and Island princesses are estimated to have brought at least 500,000 people to Juneau during about 1,000 stops since 1970, Follows said.

"The Pacific is the original Love Boat — that's the one they filmed the show on. But they also substituted the Island Princess sometimes. The studio in Hollywood was also crafted after the Pacific."

The shows, repeats of which are now in syndication, usually featured more tropical locales, but at least one episode was shot in Southeast Alaska.

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